

Chapter 3

Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation

Introduction

This Chapter discusses the environmental analyses for:

- Human resources;
- Natural resources; and
- Protected resources.

For each type of resource, this chapter describes the existing environment that would be affected by the alternatives, the environmental impacts of the alternatives, and mitigation. Each construction alternative would be built within the existing BPA Grand Coulee-Bell transmission corridor or on BPA property except between corridor mile 3/8 and the Grand Coulee Switchyard where the transmission line would divert from the existing corridor for approximately 3.5 miles. The existing corridor is about 84 miles long and crosses four counties and two cities in east-central Washington: Douglas, Grant, Lincoln and Spokane counties and Grand Coulee City and Spokane.

Figure 3-1 shows that most of the existing corridor, about 77 miles, passes through privately owned land. The Bureau of Reclamation owns the Grand Coulee Switchyard and the lands immediately surrounding the switchyard. About 3 miles of the corridor cross Riverside State Park in Spokane County, owned by Washington State.

To evaluate potential impacts from construction, operation and maintenance activities, resource specialists analyzed actions using a scale with four impact levels – high, moderate, low and no impact. Definitions of the impact levels vary with each resource. Impact definitions are given in the first part of the discussion of impacts for each resource.

Specialists considered direct and indirect impacts in the short term and long term. Direct impacts occur within or next to the corridor during a construction activity; indirect impacts occur after a construction activity, or in an area adjacent to construction activities or removed from the corridor.

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The impact analysis discusses cumulative impacts of the alternatives and lists *mitigation* that could reduce impacts. Cumulative impacts are impacts from the proposed project, together with impacts from past, present, and/or foreseeable future projects. If no cumulative impacts are expected, none are listed.

Generally, direct impacts from the construction alternatives would be confined to the existing corridor, except in those areas where new right-of-way is needed, and where access road improvements are planned outside the corridor. If the affected environment for a specific natural or other resource extends beyond the general limits of the existing corridor, it is noted under the specific resource.

For the convenience of readers who live in the area and are familiar with local landmarks, the location of an affected resource may be identified by corridor mile and local landmarks. Corridor miles refer to a specific structure in a given mile (from west to east) of the existing Grand Coulee-Bell 115-kV transmission lines. For example, a resource near corridor mile 76/5 refers to the fifth existing structure in mile 76, east of Grand Coulee. Local landmarks used are county roads, parks, etc. However, because the entire corridor is shown on most maps, and the maps are small, not all landmarks mentioned in the text appear on the maps.

Environmental studies were performed for this project in the mid-1990s and a preliminary Draft EIS was prepared but not released to the public for comment. The system capacity problems identified at that time were solved in other ways and the EIS was not completed. The environmental analyses in this chapter build on and update the information in the previous studies (Enserch Environmental, 1994) and in the previous preliminary Draft EIS. In addition, this EIS incorporates by reference the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program EIS (Bonneville Power Administration, 2000).

GRAND COULEE - BELL 500kV TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

LAND USE



Area of Interest



Data Source: U.S.G.S Digital Line Graphs, Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, USGS Landuse, Bonneville Power Administration Regional GIS Database. All data is best AVAILABLE. 5/13/02

- Developed
- Other
- Range Land
- Agriculture
- Mile Marker
- Substation or Switchyard
- Major Road
- Grand Coulee-Bell Corridor
- COUNTY BOUNDARY



SCALE 1:325,000

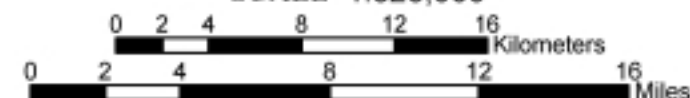


FIGURE 3-1

